

BOARD OF SELECTMEN
SELECTMEN MEETING
MONDAY, JULY 14, 2014 - 2:00 P.M.
SELECTMEN MEETING ROOM

Meeting came to order at 2:00 P.M. with Selectmen Michael J. Schleiff, Kim R. Roy and Troy E. Garron present.

DISCUSSION

Fire Chief Selection

Garron began by saying that all candidates had a lot of great qualities. He used three basic areas to base his decision; their background, how they interviewed and how they rated in the assessment center that was conducted. His first choice was Mr. LaBelle because of his background and things he has gone through and his second pick was Mr. Weber.

Roy stated that she did some research. She went through the assessments and also called Austin Sennett to get the reasons behind the numbers because when we did the first assessment some of the scores were analyzed in written form and that was lacking that in the last assessment. She did get the reasons behind the scores and why people were stronger in some aspects and not in others. She continued to say that in Halifax we are looking for a working Chief and definitely need someone with a fire knowledge. With Chief Carrico we had a very strong administrator, which we needed at the time as we needed our policies updated and fine-tuning in the department as we became full time a couple of years before that and he did a fine job doing that. She is personally looking for someone who has knowledge of a call force and the knowledge and personality to combine the call and full time firefighters. In addition she is looking for a chief who is firm, discipline and will not back down but also but who will listen. Lastly someone who will has a thought out plan when they come to the Board with an idea. Roy's first choice was Jason Viveiros and her second was Thomas LaBelle.

Schleiff began by saying that all the candidates were great and would make good fire chiefs. All of them could use some tweaking, some a little more some a little less. He based his decision on his interviewing and how they answered the questions that were asked by the Board. Also the willingness that they wanted to do the job and do whatever it took to bring the call and full timers together and continue the traditions of Halifax that we currently are doing. There was not one candidate that did not rise to that. He believes that there were two candidates that had that had more experience/knowledge to hit the ground running quicker than other candidates. Schleiff's number one pick was is Bradley Weber and Thomas LaBelle was number two.

Roy wanted to sum up the decision at this point and stated that neither Garron nor Schleiff chose Jason Viveiros and they were looking at Mr. Weber or Mr. LaBelle. She feels that LaBelle is one of her two but wanted to clarify why Jason Viveiros was number one to her and why Mr. Weber was not on her list at all.

Jason Viveiros

Roy stated that he ranked #1 in three of the four exercises during the assessments. He has experience in emergency management, grants and budgets and was the Chair on an emergency food committee. His assessment brought out strong

leader he took responsibility when things did not go as they should have. He was clear, consistent and fair in the discipline process.

Mr. LaBelle

Roy pointed out that he was #1 in the fire incident out of all four candidates but does not have the call background with the exception of his relationship with Avon. Also he did not have budget or grant background but she felt these are things that can be taught. She wants to make sure that the person chosen is open to call force and is a team builder because that is important to the town.

Mr. Weber

Was not Roy's #1 or #2. What swayed her away was that he was not aware of what our government structure and felt that if you want to leader in the community/ or a department head you should research the town government because Halifax does not have a strong town manager and the fire chief reports directly to the Board of Selectmen.

Roy said Mr. Weber was honest about his relationship with his Board and his team. She did do some research and found that he did not get a great six month review and after his annual review there was comment in the newspaper from him saying "I worked very hard these last six months to make up for a not so great six month review". This just did not feel good to Roy even though he is highly educated and scored very well she does not think he is the right fit for Halifax.

Schleiff understands the confusion about Town Managers because each town is different. Mr. Viveiros and Mr. LaBelle to him were neck-and-neck. He would like to see the Board on the same page when the vote is taken and that these are each Board member's opinions that they are offering one another.

Roy likes to highlight the positives but also wants to recognize what concerns her and it is not that she could not work with the other #1 chooses but for Halifax she thought Mr. Viveiros is the best fit and this is no disrespect to Mr. LaBelle. Again he was her #2 person and there is nothing that we could not work on with him if he was offered the position.

Garron said he picked Mr. LaBelle because of his background in training doping in house and working in a larger department that he had he thinks the abilities to adjust to what is going on. More than anything else he liked his interview. People could be educated and not have experience thinks his experience and background shows that he has dealt with incidents and things in life. I did not choose Jason because he questioned that if you had such a qualified individual seeking to be a chief withdraw for the chief position in Sandwich and is applying here. Not saying anything is wrong just seems strange that I would let somebody like that leave with his background. If Jeff wanted the position, I much rather pick somebody in house because it reflects on the whole department that they come along to become leaders.

Mr. McCormick's interview went well and like the fact that he was honest when he said he is not going to make every call but will make every call he can because one thing in life is that you can never be certain where you will be. The problem Garron had with Mr. Weber is that he is under the gun. He has a lot of respect for him as he is working in a hostile environment and that transferred into a station where they had someone in-house individual that everyone loved but chose him from outside. He understands because he has been there on many occasions.

Schleiff thinks Mr. Viveiros is more than qualified to do the job and is willing to switch to him if the Board so chooses. Schleiff took one out of the top two that he thought would fit well then he took the two with reservation and picked one of those. He would still like one of the top two as consideration. His thinking of taking the top pick out of his group number two would help to move it along.

Garron is not willing to rush this because he thinks Mr. LaBelle is the best candidate for the position because his personality matches well with the department likes the idea that he is willing to work with his staff to make sure what is best. He has his reservation Mr. Viveiros – why he's leaving/was not chosen in Sandwich feels like something is a mist. Again this is a three-Board decision.

Roy pointed out that they all had Mr. LaBelle in our choices but is not giving up on Mr. Viveiros. She asked Mr. Sennett what is this *recommendation with reservation* and said it should be recommended or not recommended. My only concern about Mr. LaBelle is the lack of knowledge of call force because we are such a large call force. Maybe this is something that can be learned I don't know. Thinks what is really important is that we have a chief who is a team-builder and not someone who had one opinion and does not want to hear another.

Garron said the key to any department is being able to hire the proper people and then train them to do their job and he feels that Mr. LaBelle has the capabilities to do that based on his interview and his packet.

Schleiff thought the second best interview was with Mr. Viveiros because he interviewed well, answered the questions straight forward and did not seem to have any hesitation. Also He understood what was required and what we are looking for in a chief. Thinks he is the stronger of the two.

Garron moved that Mr. LaBelle to be the new fire chief, whether or not the Board was ready to make a vote at this time.

Roy seconded for the purpose of discussion and regardless whether she votes for or against Mr. LaBelle she wants him to know that she will work with him and support him as the chief if that is what Schleiff and Garron would like.

Schleiff stated that there is no wrong pick. Garron said the five things that we as a board want in a chief are administration, grant writing, training ability, hiring and a listener and then asked what are the missing? He sees that in Mr. LaBelle.

Schleiff asked if there was any further discussion and Roy and Garron said no. Schleiff asked if there was a second for Mr. LaBelle and Roy said yes. Roy asked if they needed to state *on successful completion* ... Garron said a background check and Schleiff said contract negotiations. Roy said that this is a big decision and we all take it very seriously.

Garron said that he had studied this and made sure that all his notes were right and said he could be wrong but used the same logic when Chief Benjamino and Chief Carrico were hired and it worked so let's hope it does this time. Schleiff stated the BOS needs to be on the same page and support whoever is hired as the chief so he will go along with yes on Mr. LaBelle. Garron said that if all unanimous then you need to call all in favor.

Roy asked before you call the vote again she said she did a lot of research and read articles and said some Board of Selectmen give it a unanimous vote in the end because it is the right thing to do. She has a different philosophy about that and again she said her choice was Mr. Viveiros but will gladly work with Mr. LaBelle as he is her second choice so yes you may call for the vote. Schleiff said he still like Mr. Viveiros and Roy agreed.

Troy E. Garron	-	Yes – Mr. LaBelle
Kim R. Roy	-	No – Mr. LaBelle
Michael J. Schleiff	-	No – Mr. LaBelle

Roy said her vote was because he is not her #1 choice but will totally support him.

Schleiff agreed with Garron but said he has to give some stock in the process that the assessment center did and have to give some weigh to their assessment therefore will have to decline with not hiring Mr. LaBelle.

Roy motioned that the Board offer the chief's job to Jason Viveiros pending successful contract negotiations and background check. Garron seconded for discussion purposes.

Schleiff asked if there was any further discussion and Garron said as he stated before he has his doubts about the gentleman (Viveiros) but should the Board vote it they'll get his full support.

Schleiff said he did bring up a good point as to why he withdrew his application for chief in Sandwich and thinks it is important to know but he does not know why either. Our previous chief is now in Sandwich and now it is like we are rewarding someone from Sandwich because of it.

Roy said that she talked with Chief Carrico to get a little background because she too questioned why here and not Sandwich. She is sure this will come out in the report when we do our background check but she feels comfortable with why he withdrew and understands why he chose to apply here.

Schleiff asked any further discussion? All those in favor with the stipulations as stated for Mr. Viveiros to become Halifax Fire Chief:

Troy E. Garron	-	No
Kim R. Roy	-	Yes
Michael J. Schleiff	-	Yes

Schleiff stated they had a majority vote and said until there is a background check and negotiate a contract nothing is a done deal.

Garron wanted to thank Mr. McCormick, Mr. LaBelle, and Mr. Weber for coming out and applying as he understands it is ordeal and wishes them well.

Seelig asked if the Board is going to ask the Police Chief to conduct the background check.

Moved by Schleiff and seconded by Roy, the Board unanimously voted to have the Police Chief do the background check.

Seelig asked the Board if they wanted to assign one individual to handle contract negotiations along with him. Roy said that she does fire and would be happy to do it.

Moved by Garron and seconded by Schleiff, the Board voted that Selectmen Kim Roy initiate negotiations with the soon-to-be fire chief.

Schleiff thanked Acting Chief Cuzzo for stepping up and the Board looks forward to working with anyone coming in.

Apology

Schleiff wanted to apologize about a comment he made at the end on one of their recent meetings regarding an evaluation that was done by one of the Board members for another employee. He said he was just kidding around and he would have said the same stupid comment no matter who did the evaluation and it was no reflection on anybody in the town. He continued to say that in the future he needs to be more careful and it was not intended to imply anything. The Board member is very friendly with everyone he thought it was in laughter but it wasn't and for that he apologizes. There were two letters submitted regarding the comment and he can see where it could be misinterpreted. The comment was a stupid and he should have not said it. It was not in his heart to hurt anyone or to infer or go against anybody and he has the greatest respect for everyone who works here.

Schleiff read the letter he wrote.

Garron stated apology accepted and Roy thanked him for his words.

Route 36 Boat Ramp and Parking Area

The office has received an email from the Monponsett Watershed Association regarding the increase of bass fishing tournaments on East Monponsett. They are asking that the State agency that in charge of the pond to stop issuing permits as the tournaments are degrading the pond's water quality (bring in new weeds and churning up existing). Garron does not disagree with them using our lakes but people bring their salt water boats that have not been flushed out to our ponds and then pollute the water. He asked what does the State law say and how do we prevent them from using? Seelig said the State regs say it is our boat ramp (Rte. 36) and we have jurisdiction over it and residents are allowed non-residents are not (Rte. 58 can be used by non-residents). Seelig's state that for the fishing tournaments they show up early so it may be that the chief will have to have officers pass through a couple of times during the day checking to see if they have residents stickers and if not notify them issue a warning but it continues to occur issue a fine. Garron said that when we had lake patrol they were out there monitoring the boats but we no longer have that so it is hard not to mention we are spending a lot of money to clean the lakes, and boats coming in that have not been flushed are not helping the cause.

Schleiff suggested having someone look at the signs to make sure they are clear enough. Seelig said the one at the ramp is clear but the one in the parking lot is next to a telephone pole but he will talk with Chief Broderick about it.

Garron said whoever is sponsoring the fish contest needs to let the contestants know that they cannot park at Rte. 36 because they are the reason they are coming here to town.

Seelig said the State is going to put a stipulation on the licenses issued saying this does not include using the Rte. 36 boat ramp and he is going to notify the contacts he has and let them know.

MEETING ADJOURNED

There being no further business, moved by Garron and seconded by Roy, the Board unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 2:55 P.M.

Troy E. Garron
Clerk

/pjm